

# Supplemental Report 3

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## Christel House Academy Detailed Performance Assessment and Profile



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<http://www.christelhouse.org/academy>

▪ Grades served in 2003-04	K-5
▪ Enrollment in 2003-04	273 students
▪ Grades served at capacity	K-8
▪ Maximum school size at capacity	860 students

This supplemental report presents information about the school in three sections:

- Christel House Academy's Students (enrollment and demographic information)
- Performance at Christel House Academy
- Detailed Description of Christel House Academy's Programs and Activities (as provided by the school)

## Christel House Academy's Students

**Figure S3-1. Enrollment and demand for Christel House Academy**

	Number of students
Maximum possible enrollment in 2003-04 pursuant to charter	326
Number of students enrolled in 2003-04 <sup>1</sup>	273
Number of students on waiting list as of spring 2004 for 2004-05 school year <sup>2</sup>	104

<sup>1</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education website, based on school's Pupil Enrollment Count reported every October.

<sup>2</sup>Source: School self-report of data, as of spring 2004. 2004 was the first time this information was collected in this manner; therefore, waiting list information for the 2003-04 school year is not available.

**Figure S3-2. Christel House Academy student composition**

Gender <sup>1</sup>		Race & Ethnicity <sup>2</sup>				Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch <sup>2</sup>	Special Education <sup>3</sup>	Limited English Proficient <sup>4</sup>
Male	Female	African-American	Hispanic	Caucasian	Other			
52.4%	47.6%	43.2%	9.9%	35.5%	11.4%	60.4%	13.9%	5.1%

Note: See main report for comparative data.

<sup>1</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education website, based on school's Pupil Enrollment Count reported every October.

<sup>2</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education website, based on school's Pupil Enrollment Count reported every October.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Exceptional Learners, count reported December 2003.

<sup>4</sup>Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Language and Minority Programs, count reported March 2004.

## Performance at Christel House Academy

The section below describes Christel House Academy's performance over its second school year by addressing the common performance indicators in the Mayor's Charter School Performance Framework. The complete Performance Framework may be viewed on-line at <http://www.indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/Education/Charter/Accountability/2004/>.

In some areas, this section also provides information about the school's performance in 2002-03 as compared to its performance in 2003-04. For additional information on how performance has changed, view the *2003 Accountability Report on Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools*, also available on-line at the website listed above.

### Is the educational program a success?

#### Is the school making adequate yearly academic progress, as measured by the Indiana Department of Education's system of accountability?

**Performance on the statewide assessment.** Figure S3-3 displays the percentage of Christel House Academy 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders who received passing scores on ISTEP+ examinations in the fall of 2003 and, where applicable, the percentage passing in 2002. It also shows the results for

Indianapolis Public Schools and all Indiana public schools. While 2002 data are provided, it is not possible to use these results to measure individual students' progress over time because each grade's test results pertain to different children in 2002 versus 2003. Fall 2003 was the first time Christel House students currently enrolled in grades 3 and 5 took the ISTEP+, and thus data on how these same students previously performed on ISTEP+ are not available. In the future, as ISTEP+ is administered in all grades, the Mayor's Office will be able to determine how much progress over time Christel House students are making on these tests.

**Figure S3-3. Percentage of students in Christel House Academy ("CHA"), Indianapolis Public Schools ("IPS"), and Indiana ("IN") passing ISTEP+ tests at the *beginning* of the fall 2003 semester<sup>1,2</sup>**

	English			Math			Both (English & Math)			Science		
	CHA	IPS	IN	CHA	IPS	IN	CHA	IPS	IN	CHA	IPS	IN
3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders												
2003	56%	62%	74%	35%	65%	71%	30%	52%	63%			
2002	37%	58%	72%	20%	57%	67%	18%	44%	59%			
5 <sup>th</sup> Graders												
2003 <sup>3</sup>										35%	32%	61%

Source: Indiana Department of Education.

Note: Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

<sup>1</sup>Since 2003 is the first year these students have taken the ISTEP+, it is not possible to use these results as a measure of student progress at Christel House Academy.

<sup>2</sup>Blank areas denote that the applicable grade was not tested in the particular subject area.

<sup>3</sup>Since 2003 was the first year Indiana students took the ISTEP+ in 5<sup>th</sup> grade science, historical data are not available.

**Adequate Yearly Progress.** Christel House Academy made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2003. As required by the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, the Indiana Department of Education has determined Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for all Indiana schools, including charter schools in operation during the 2002-03 school year. The Department determines whether each school makes AYP based on the percentage of students passing the English and mathematics ISTEP+ tests. In addition, each elementary and middle school must make AYP by raising or maintaining high attendance rates and each high school must raise or maintain high graduation rates.<sup>1</sup>

### Are students making substantial gains over time?

**Test score analysis.** Christel House Academy administered the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) exam to its students in grades two through five in fall 2003 and spring 2004. Each number in Figure S3-4 indicates the percentage change in the average test score achieved in a particular grade and subject from fall to spring. For example, the +9.9 in the first row indicates that the average reading score for students who were 2<sup>nd</sup> graders was 9.9% higher in spring 2004 than in fall 2003.

<sup>1</sup> AYP also is determined for a variety of subgroups (race/ethnicity, special education, limited English proficiency, free/reduced-price lunch eligibility), provided that there are at least 30 students in a particular subgroup. Christel House Academy did not have enough students in any of the subgroup categories, therefore AYP was not determined for the subgroups.

**Figure S3-4. Percentage change in average NWEA MAP scores between fall 2003 and spring 2004 at Christel House Academy**

	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Reading	+9.9	+7.6	+7.1	+7.4
Math	+9.3	+8.1	+6.4	+7.5
Language	+10.0	+7.2	+4.7	+5.3

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data 2004," prepared by New American Schools, Alexandria, VA, 2004.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

Figure S3-4 shows that students made progress, on average, between fall 2003 and spring 2004 in all grades and all subjects tested. But how large were these gains? Analysts at New American Schools (NAS) used two methods to answer that question. First, they compared the progress of Christel House Academy's students to that of other students in Indiana and nationally who took the same exams at the same points in their academic careers ("comparative gains"). Second, they determined whether students' gains were large enough for them to reach proficiency by the end of eighth grade ("sufficient gains").

*Comparative Gains.* Since the NWEA MAP is a national standardized test, we can ask the following question: if we ranked all the students in Indiana and across the country who took the NWEA MAP, where would *Christel House Academy students stand on average* in those rankings?

Figures S3-5 and S3-6 provide the answer. For example, the first row of Figure S3-5 shows how 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at Christel House Academy performed in reading. In fall 2003, on average 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at Christel House Academy scored as well as or better than 20% of all students in Indiana in reading. We call this number, 20, Christel House Academy's "Fall 2003 Average Percentile" for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in reading. The next column shows that by spring 2004, on average Christel House Academy 2<sup>nd</sup> graders performed as well as or better than 40% of all students in Indiana. The school's "Spring 2004 Average Percentile" was 40.

**Figure S3-5. INDIANA comparison: Academic progress of Christel House Academy students, fall 2003 through spring 2004**

Grade/ subject		Fall 2003 Average Percentile	Spring 2004 Average Percentile	Gained ground vs. students in Indiana	Stayed even with students in Indiana	Lost ground vs. students in Indiana
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Reading	20	40	✓		
	Math	17	47	✓		
	Language	24	39	✓		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Reading	21	33	✓		
	Math	24	38	✓		
	Language	20	33	✓		
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Reading	11	39	✓		
	Math	17	35	✓		
	Language	21	26	✓		
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Reading	9	29	✓		
	Math	12	31	✓		
	Language	12	20	✓		

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data 2004," prepared by New American Schools, Alexandria, VA, 2004.

Note: Conclusions about whether students gained or lost ground were based on simple comparisons of fall and spring percentiles.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

**Figure S3-6. NATIONAL comparison: Academic progress of Christel House Academy students, fall 2003 through spring 2004**

Grade/ subject		Fall 2003 Average Percentile	Spring 2004 Average Percentile	Gained ground vs. students nationally	Stayed even with students nationally	Lost ground vs. students nationally
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Reading	20	44	✓		
	Math	18	53	✓		
	Language	25	49	✓		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Reading	26	39	✓		
	Math	30	48	✓		
	Language	27	44	✓		
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Reading	13	44	✓		
	Math	22	41	✓		
	Language	26	37	✓		
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Reading	12	34	✓		
	Math	17	37	✓		
	Language	16	29	✓		

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data 2004," prepared by New American Schools, Alexandria, VA, 2004.

Note: Conclusions about whether students gained or lost ground were based on simple comparisons of fall and spring percentiles.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

What does this mean? It means that, on average, Christel House Academy's 2<sup>nd</sup> graders *moved up in the statewide ranking* in reading between fall 2003 and spring 2004. So on the right side of Figure S3-5, we indicate that Christel House Academy students "gained ground" versus students in Indiana. Figure S3-6 displays the same information, but compares students' performance to their peers *nationally*.

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As displayed in Figures S3-5 and S3-6, it is evident that Christel House Academy students, on average, gained ground on their Indiana and national peers in all grades and all subjects. This result is a significant improvement relative to Christel House Academy's performance in the previous school year. In 2002-03 the school "gained ground" in only five of the 14 grades and subjects tested, "stayed even" in three and "lost ground" in six. In addition, many of the gains made in 2003-04 are quite large.

*Sufficient Gains.* Are the students in this school making *sufficient gains* toward becoming proficient? It is not enough to know whether students made a year's worth of progress between 2003 and 2004. Some students, since they are starting behind, need to make *more* than a year's worth of progress in order to become proficient by the end of eighth grade. What proportion of the school's students is making the gains they need to make?

To find out, analysts projected each student's *future* gain based on the gain he or she achieved between fall 2003 and spring 2004 on the MAP exam. If the student continued to gain at that rate, would he or she be proficient by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade? If so, he or she made "sufficient gains." Based on this analysis, NAS calculated the percentage of students who made sufficient gains in each subject and grade.

Figure S3-7 displays the results. For example, 100% of students who were 2<sup>nd</sup> graders in 2003-04 made sufficient gains in reading. That is, if these 2<sup>nd</sup> graders continue learning at the rate they did during this period, 100% of them will be proficient by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Figure S3-7. Percentage of Christel House Academy students achieving sufficient gains to become proficient by the end of 8th Grade, fall 2003 through spring 2004**

	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Reading	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Math	100.0%	100.0%	95.5%	100.0%
Language	100.0%	100.0%	95.5%	87.5%

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data 2004," prepared by New American Schools, Alexandria, VA, 2004.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

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## Is the organization effective and well-run?

**Is the school in sound fiscal health?** The Mayor's Office commissioned a review of each school's finances. Reviews by the outside accounting firm revealed that Christel House Academy was managing its financial practices satisfactorily, with no significant problems. A summary of Christel House Academy's finances, including financial statements, appears in Supplemental Report 6.

Sixty-four percent of parents surveyed at Christel House Academy reported they are satisfied with the school's finances, while 22% of parents reported they "don't know." In 2003, 75% of parents reported their satisfaction with school finances and 19% reported they "don't know." At the same time, 54% of school staff reported in 2004 they are satisfied with school finances, whereas in 2003 just 14% expressed their satisfaction in this area.

**Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong?** The school's attendance rate was 94.8% in 2003-04 (see Figure S3-8), an improvement from 92.5% in 2002-03. Of parents surveyed, 78% expressed their intention to continue to enroll their children in

the school as long as the school serves students their children's age, while 14% reported they were unsure. On a scale of 1 (not at all likely) to 5 (extremely likely), parents on average rated their likelihood of recommending the school to other parents or guardians as a good place to attend at 4.07. Staff members on average rated their likelihood at 3.83 on the same question. At the same time, the school's official enrollment count as maintained by the Indiana Department of Education, 273 students, fell short of the school's maximum capacity of 326 students for 2003-04.

**Figure S3-8. Christel House Academy attendance rate in 2003-04 school year**

	Attendance rate
Christel House Academy	94.8%
Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS)	94.1%
All Indiana Public Schools	95.9%

Source: Indiana Department of Education website.

**Is the school's Board active and competent in its oversight?** The Mayor's Office conducted governance reviews of Christel House Academy by attending a quarterly Board meeting and reviewing the Board meeting minutes for the 2003-04 school year. Minutes showed that the quarterly Board meetings were conducted in accordance with the agendas outlined for the meetings and included reports from school staff, the Board treasurer, and the Board's parent representative. Of particular note, the parent's involvement on the Board helps to ensure that the school's parents are sufficiently represented. Board members asked thoughtful questions, often related to their individual areas of expertise (e.g., human resources, finance, etc.), to which school staff provided clear answers immediately or followed up at a later time. The review of minutes further showed that the Board has a clear process for discussing and approving decisions related to the school. The review suggested that the school include additional information in the Board meeting minutes regarding business conducted in order to ensure that the public is informed fully of the matters discussed by the Board.

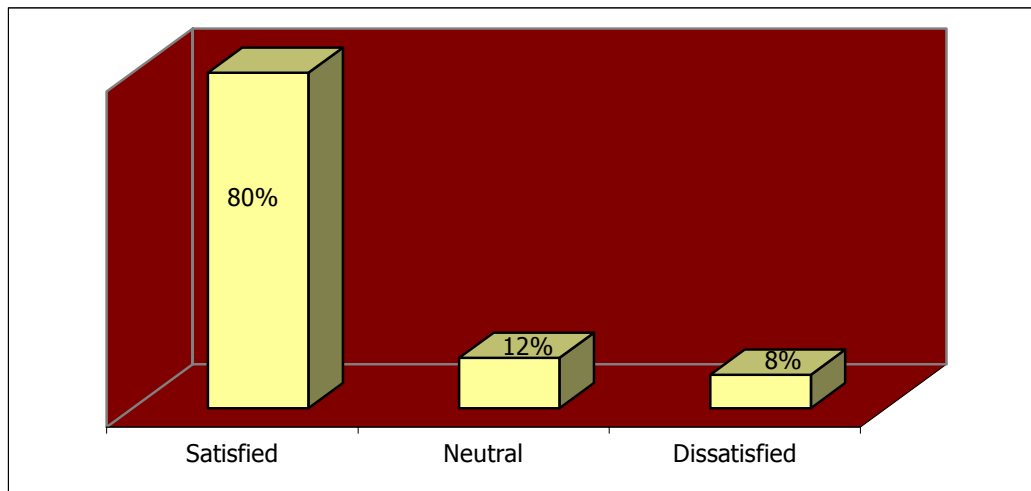
According to the expert site visit team, "all evidence indicates the Board is effective and dedicated in its oversight and has significant expertise related to education and education administration, assessment of student learning, business, and finance." The team commended the school on creating a Board composed of members that utilize their expertise to "...effectively advise on a wide range of school issues." The site team's observations and review of Board meeting minutes found that "the Board is active and involved in meetings and school activities. For example, one Board member has provided extensive training and guidance for staff in using assessment results..." to inform teaching and learning.

**Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school?** Figure S3-9 shows how Christel House parents responded to a question about their overall satisfaction with the charter school. Four out of five parents at Christel House reported they were satisfied overall with their charter school, whereas in the 2003 survey just 65% of parents reported their overall satisfaction. The percentage of parents who reported they were dissatisfied with the school decreased from 22% in 2003 to 8% in 2004. Figure S3-10 shows the percentage of parents who were satisfied with specific aspects of the school as well as the average satisfaction rate for each aspect.

In focus groups conducted by the expert site team, parents reported "...a climate of openness [and] that they feel welcome in the school." The team reported parents describing teachers as "wonderful" and "dedicated and committed"; parents further reported to the team that "...there are high standards and expectations for all students and that [the school] is meeting or exceeding their [own]

expectations.” The team found that parents “...are invested in contributing to the success of the school and all parents [in the focus groups] reported a belief that their children were receiving a quality education.” The team noted, however, that parents reported the following areas for desired change in the school: smaller classes, particularly in kindergarten; a shorter school day; improvements in the facility (for example, as related to noise and air circulation); and “...a higher level of systematic and straightforward communication,” particularly about changes related to new management of the school by Edison Schools, Inc., an education management organization.

**Figure S3-9. Overall parent satisfaction with Christel House Academy**



Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.  
Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.



**Figure S3-10. Parent satisfaction with features at Christel House Academy**

School Feature	Average rate of satisfaction <sup>1</sup> (5=Very Satisfied)	Satisfied <sup>2</sup>	Neutral	Dissatisfied <sup>3</sup>
School size	4.28	86%	9%	5%
Class size	3.71	63%	16%	21%
Length of school day	3.29	52%	14%	34%
Length of school year	3.73	67%	16%	16%
Ability of school to fulfill mission	3.77	61%	18%	16%
Individualized attention	4.04	71%	14%	13%
Academic standards/expectations	4.10	78%	13%	9%
Curriculum	4.07	77%	13%	10%
Teaching quality	4.45	90%	5%	3%
Instructional quality, language arts	4.36	90%	3%	6%
Instructional quality, mathematics	4.28	87%	5%	7%
Materials to support curriculum	4.07	79%	8%	13%
Innovation in teaching practices	4.12	84%	7%	9%
Computers and other technology	4.20	85%	7%	8%
Classroom management/behavior	4.08	77%	13%	10%
Communication from the school	3.99	74%	14%	12%
Parent information about students	4.13	82%	6%	12%
Accessibility/openness to parents	4.09	76%	14%	10%
Parent participation opportunities	4.11	78%	14%	7%
Parent involvement	3.92	71%	15%	13%
Teacher/student school pride	4.12	79%	14%	6%
Relationship with local community	4.01	65%	17%	7%
Extracurricular activities	3.40	51%	19%	28%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and "don't know" responses.

<sup>1</sup>Satisfaction rated on a scale of 1-5: 1= very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. Rating calculations do not include "don't know" responses.

<sup>2</sup>Includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses.

<sup>3</sup>Includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

### **Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?**

Governance reviews conducted by the Mayor's Office show that the Christel House Academy administration has made great strides in overcoming some of the challenges identified by the expert site visit team in 2002-03. The administration successfully created a new, more positive environment in the school by implementing a new daily schedule designed to better focus student learning. The recruitment and hiring of experienced teachers and staff also contributed significantly to the improvements in the 2003-04 school year. The organizational leadership of the school remained strong throughout the year as evidenced by orderly record-keeping by the school's administration and timely submissions of reports and information. The school has satisfactorily maintained the compliance binder, which contains all of the school's governance, management, and organizational documents and is reviewed by the Mayor's Office on a monthly basis.

The school's principal resigned in December 2003. For the remainder of the school year, the school's Superintendent acted as interim principal. The school continues to search for a permanent principal with the assistance of the school's new education management organization, Edison Schools, Inc.

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The expert site visit team commended the school's leaders on implementing academic and organizational changes such as:

- "strong professional development that aligned with critical learning issues;
- adoption of effective curricula, classroom practices and school structures to support learning;
- adoption of a school-wide behavior management system; and
- signing a contract with Edison Schools."

The expert site visit team further reported that the school's current "...leadership is knowledgeable and aware of school functioning and issues and has clear, explicit goals and priorities." The team noted, however, that the school should work to ensure that when a permanent leader is hired, this individual should be made equally informed of school operations, issues, and priorities. The team further recommended that the "school leadership might, as possible, respond to teacher and parent concerns and questions regarding the transition to Edison. Teachers have particular concerns about changes in conditions of employment (e.g., changes in teacher roles and responsibilities, compensation, benefits)."

Of parents surveyed this year, 59% reported they were satisfied with the people running Christel House Academy, whereas in 2003 84% reported their satisfaction in this area. However, 80% of staff members surveyed this year reported their satisfaction with the school's leadership, up from 25% in 2003.

**Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations related to: organizational structure and governance obligations; physical plants that are safe and conducive to learning; fair and appropriate pupil enrollment processes; reasonable and safe transportation options available to eligible students; and legal obligations related to access and services to special needs and English as a second language students?**

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Christel House Academy satisfactorily met its obligations in 2003-04 in complying with relevant laws and regulations and in providing access to students across Indianapolis. Neither the Mayor's Office's internal systems nor the expert site visit team indicated any significant concerns related to these obligations. Figure S3-11 displays parent and staff survey responses to questions about school operations.

**Figure S3-11. Parent and school staff satisfaction with Christel House Academy school operations**

School Feature	Parents				School Staff			
	Average rate of satisfaction <sup>1</sup> (5=Very Satisfied)	Satisfied <sup>2</sup>	Neutral	Dis-satisfied <sup>3</sup>	Average rate of satisfaction <sup>1</sup> (5=Very Satisfied)	Satisfied <sup>2</sup>	Neutral	Dis-satisfied <sup>3</sup>
Services for special needs students <sup>4,5</sup>	4.44	89%	11%	0%	3.71	65%	18%	18%
School leadership	3.54	59%	20%	20%	3.96	80%	16%	4%
School finances	4.16	64%	9%	5%	3.78	54%	31%	4%
Safety	4.45	93%	3%	3%	4.31	88%	12%	0%
School facilities	4.40	91%	6%	3%	4.27	85%	12%	4%
Enrollment process	4.02	75%	20%	6%	3.77	54%	31%	0%
Transportation <sup>6</sup>	3.83	64%	19%	17%	3.88	69%	27%	4%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents and staffs administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and "don't know" responses.

<sup>1</sup>Satisfaction rated on a scale of 1-5: 1= very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. Rating calculations do not include "don't know" responses.

<sup>2</sup>Includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses.

<sup>3</sup>Includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

<sup>4</sup>Special needs students include those for whom English is a second language or who have disabilities, academic difficulties, etc.

<sup>5</sup>Only parents of children with special needs in the charter school responded to this question. Only staff members with instructional responsibilities and students with special needs in their classroom responded to this question.

<sup>6</sup>Only parents whose children used the school's transportation services in the 2003-04 school year responded to this question.

## Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

**Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders?** According to the site team, constituents at Christel House expressed strong support of and "...commitment to the school's mission and consistently describe the mission [as providing a] quality education, [helping students to] achieve potential, [teaching] core values, serving the disadvantaged, and meeting the needs of students who are not successful in other schools." At the same time, the team noted that "further attainment of the mission might be enhanced by developing buy-in and support among a larger number of parents." As illustrated in Figure S3-10, 61% of parents reported their satisfaction in the school's ability to fulfill its stated mission. One hundred percent of staff members surveyed reported that they were aware of the goals of the school, and 82% believed the goals were being met across the school "very well" or "fairly well."

**Does the school have a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade?** The site team confirmed that "the school has a high-quality curriculum and supporting materials. Evidence indicates that the majority of teachers effectively implement the curriculum and the school employs many effective school-wide and classroom-level strategies." In particular, the team highlighted the school's "Step Up To Writing" program for providing a "...consistent framework for writing that is used in all classrooms. Students were observed to be writing during classroom visits, and halls contain many exemplary examples of student writing." Teachers reported to the site team that the school's math program was strong but not implemented consistently throughout the school. The team thus noted that "teachers might benefit from additional training and discussion to increase the consistency of implementation."

Figure S3-10 shows that, similar to 2003, about eight in ten Christel House Academy parents reported on the 2004 survey that they were satisfied with their school's materials to support the curriculum. As Figure S3-12 illustrates, about 50% of staff members reported satisfaction with the school's materials to support the curriculum, compared to the 27% who in 2003 reported their satisfaction with the resources available for instruction at their charter school.

**Figure S3-12. School staff satisfaction with features at Christel House Academy**

School Feature	Average rate of satisfaction <sup>1</sup>	Satisfied <sup>2</sup>	Neutral	Dissatisfied <sup>3</sup>
School size	4.32	85%	8%	4%
Class size	3.36	46%	19%	31%
Length of school day	2.12	15%	8%	73%
Length of school year	2.69	23%	31%	46%
Ability of school to fulfill mission	4.12	77%	19%	0%
Individualized attention	4.12	77%	19%	0%
Academic standards/expectations	4.46	85%	8%	0%
Curriculum	4.25	73%	15%	4%
Teaching quality	4.42	88%	4%	0%
Instructional quality, language arts	4.54	88%	4%	0%
Instructional quality, mathematics	4.17	73%	12%	8%
Materials to support curriculum	3.32	50%	15%	31%
Innovation in teaching practices	4.22	88%	4%	0%
Computers and other technology	4.00	77%	19%	0%
Classroom management/behavior	4.00	73%	19%	4%
Communication from the school	3.63	54%	31%	8%
Parent information about students	3.71	62%	27%	4%
Accessibility/openness to parents	3.92	73%	15%	4%
Parent participation opportunities	3.63	54%	31%	8%
Parent involvement	2.83	23%	31%	38%
Teacher/student school pride	3.88	73%	15%	8%
Relationship with local community	3.58	50%	38%	4%
Extracurricular activities	2.33	12%	31%	50%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Satisfaction percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and "don't know" responses.

<sup>1</sup>Satisfaction rated on a scale of 1-5: 1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. Rating calculations do not include "don't know" responses.

<sup>2</sup>Includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses.

<sup>3</sup>Includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

**Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction?** As Figures S3-10 and S3-12 illustrate, nearly eight in ten parents and over eight in ten staff members surveyed are satisfied with the academic standards for their charter school students.

In 2003, the expert site visit team found that the school needed to take steps to strengthen processes for using data to understand and improve student learning. After site visits in spring 2004, the expert site visit team commended Christel House Academy for being "data-driven" and making extensive use of data to understand and design effective learning experiences for students." For

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example, the team noted that now “the school uses a weekly writing assessment to ensure students are working in the correct groups during the first-period reading blocks.” Teachers also reported to the team the “...ways in which they use data in the school and in the classroom, such as for assigning peer reading teams, working with small groups, and providing individual instruction for students with special needs.” The team further noted that the school “...has invested significant effort in developing their expertise in using data.” For example, one of the school’s Board members and others have conducted workshops for teachers, and teachers “also participated in ‘data mining’ sessions (identifying key findings and priority issues from large amounts of data).”

**Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success?** The expert site visit team reported that, “overall, the school climate is relaxed, students are orderly, and staff is friendly and focused on teaching and learning. The large majority of teachers employ effective classroom rituals, behavior management is consistent and strong, and students are focused on learning.” The site team observed that “...students appear respectful and proud of their school and teachers were described by parents and students as ‘awesome,’ ‘wonderful,’ and ‘dedicated and committed.’” More than three-quarters of parents and nearly three-quarters of staff members surveyed reported they were satisfied with the sense of pride students and teachers have in their school.

The school’s interim principal reported to the site team “a 94% decrease in behavior referrals to the office during this school year” and that “several teachers reported a similar statistic with obvious pride and sense of accomplishment.” According to the team, “all constituents report that they feel safe at Christel House Academy.” As Figure S3-11 shows, 93% of parents and 88% of staff members reported their satisfaction with school safety. Additionally, on a scale of one (very dissatisfied) to five (very satisfied), parents and staff members surveyed on average rated their satisfaction with classroom management and student behavior as 4.08 and 4.00 respectively.

As illustrated in Figure S3-10 and S3-12 respectively, 78% of parents and 54% of staff members surveyed reported satisfaction with the opportunities available for parent participation. Nearly three-quarters of parents surveyed were satisfied with the levels of parent involvement at Christel House Academy, but only 23% of staff members expressed satisfaction in this area.

**Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school’s mission?** The expert site team’s classroom visits showed that “students participated in a variety of engaging and rigorous learning activities.... Teachers have adequate resources, use flexible groupings, have organized centers, and have visuals that provide information about learning processes. Many teachers used exemplary strategies for differentiating instruction... including assessment-identified and need-based reading groups, individual student tutoring or small-group work guided by adults (teachers, paraprofessionals, parents), peer reading, and computer-based assessment or practice.” In support of the school’s mission, the site team found “...significant evidence that [teachers] know and respond to individual student learning needs.”

The team commended the school on employing “...many strategies to identify and respond to the unique learning needs and personal circumstances of each individual student. Many students are behind grade level and at-risk in other ways. The school has in place both school-wide (e.g., literacy and math blocks and groups, effective curriculum packages, support for special education) and classroom-level (e.g., use of small groups, peer reading and tutoring, individual instruction, learning centers) strategies that appear to be effective and consistent in terms of providing a strong education for these students.”

The team also found that the school’s “...curriculum emphasizes character and ethics, core subjects, and the arts (e.g., music, visual arts, drama, dance, foreign language), thus broadly developing each child’s potential,” which is a key component of the school’s mission.

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The site team attributed the effective implementation of the curricular programs and materials it observed to “significant” staff training in 2003-04. The team further noted that “the majority of teachers in their classroom practice and in discussions demonstrate high levels of knowledge and skill.” However, the team reported “...some differences across classrooms in levels of teacher proficiency in implementing different learning strategies and curricula[r] approaches” and suggested the school “...identify areas in which individual teachers need more training and provide it.”

As illustrated in Figure S3-12, 77% of staff members surveyed reported their satisfaction with the school’s ability to fulfill its stated mission, whereas in 2003 just 20% of staff reported their satisfaction in this category.

**Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful?** In focus groups conducted by the expert site team, parents reported feeling “...welcome in the school and communicating with the school both through visits and via email.” Parents also reported receiving student and school information on a weekly basis and report cards four times each year.

As shown in Figure S3-10, 74% of Christel House parents reported that they were satisfied with communication from their school, such as about special activities, events, and meetings, as compared to 89% of the parents surveyed in 2003. At the same time, 82% of parents and 62% of school staff also reported they were satisfied with the information parents receive about student learning, as illustrated in Figures S3-10 and S3-12 respectively. In 2003, 80% of staff members expressed their satisfaction in this area.

**Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively?** The site team commended the school on “...making the necessary investments to ensure the attainment of the mission and the learning of its students. The school has staff positions that align with the critical needs of students.” The team did note a possible need for additional “...staff experienced in developing and implementing plans for children who have special needs,” given the number of Christel House Academy students who “enter behind grade level and/or with special needs.” Figure S3-13 shows how staff members responded to a survey about their satisfaction with professional features of their school.

**Figure S3-13. Staff satisfaction with Christel House Academy's professional features**

School Feature	Average rate of satisfaction <sup>1</sup>	Satisfied <sup>2</sup>	Neutral	Dissatisfied <sup>3</sup>
Competitive salary structure	4.09	65%	19%	0%
Competitive benefits (e.g., health insurance, etc.)	3.64	54%	8%	23%
Work environment	4.23	88%	12%	0%
Amount of paperwork required	2.79	27%	27%	38%
Opportunities for professional development	4.13	73%	19%	0%
Evaluation or assessment of performance	3.76	64%	28%	8%
Hours spent engaged in classroom instruction <sup>4</sup>	3.85	70%	30%	0%
Hours spent engaged in other activities <sup>4</sup>	3.60	65%	20%	15%
Time allowed for planning and preparation <sup>4</sup>	3.10	50%	15%	35%
Level of teacher autonomy in the classroom <sup>4</sup>	3.85	75%	25%	0%
Level of teacher involvement in school decisions <sup>4</sup>	3.05	30%	40%	30%
Teachers' non-teaching responsibilities <sup>4</sup>	3.10	40%	35%	25%
Time staff spend together discussing individual student needs <sup>4</sup>	2.89	30%	35%	30%

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered in spring 2004 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 8 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Satisfaction percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding and "don't know" responses.

<sup>1</sup>Satisfaction rated on a scale of 1-5: 1= very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. Rating calculations do not include "don't know" responses.

<sup>2</sup>Includes "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses.

<sup>3</sup>Includes "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses.

<sup>4</sup>Only staff members with instructional responsibilities responded to this question.

## Detailed Description of Christel House Academy's Programs and Activities

*Source: The information below was provided by the school to the Mayor's Office. It is provided here to offer a more detailed picture of the school's programs and activities.*

### Mission, philosophy, and educational program

Christel House Academy's mission is to be recognized as a provider of outstanding education to an underserved population and maintain high standards of academic rigor, efficiency and accountability. The Academy aims to provide students with the academic proficiency necessary for higher education; equip them with the desire for lifelong learning; strengthen their civic, ethical and moral values; and prepare them to be self-sufficient, contributing members of society.

The school expects every student to demonstrate mastery in English and mathematics, as well as proficiency in Spanish, which is taught to all students beginning in Kindergarten. The academic program at Christel House Academy is based on educational research that supports beginning each day with the core academic subjects – reading, phonics, and mathematics. The Academy believes these subjects are the foundation of a child's learning and the key to progress throughout his/her education and lifetime. At Christel House Academy, students spend additional time in the latter part of the school day reviewing the day's lessons and practicing the skills acquired that day. The Academy finds that reinforcing the day's lessons allows children to store knowledge for long-term use.

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Christel House Academy has adopted the Orton Gillingham method for phonics instruction, a multi-sensory approach first developed by the Dyslexia Institute that has proven successful for children with skill deficits. The Academy has adopted the McMillan McGraw Hill reading curriculum for all grades. Research has shown that this program reaches the most diverse skill sets of children across all grades, and thus is aligned well with the diverse population of children attending the school. Everyday Math, developed by the University of Chicago School Math Project, is used for mathematics at Christel House. The Everyday Math series applies mathematics lessons to real-world situations and builds comprehension by re-teaching concepts and skills throughout the year and across grade levels.

### Academic programs and initiatives

- *Behavior and Social Skills Development.* Christel House Academy uses the “responsive classroom approach” to connect social and academic learning in the school. Through this approach, students develop the skills and behaviors necessary to ensure that learning academic content can occur. For example, the school conveys to students consistent and clear rules about how to enter the classroom, communicate with teachers and other students, and behave appropriately while riding the school bus. In the first two weeks of school, students learn these rules and behaviors through role-playing and practice. Throughout the year teachers reinforce these social skills, school-wide expectations, and procedures through practice and by modeling appropriate behavior.
- *Step Up to Writing.* This program, developed by Edison Schools, Inc., is used in all grades and subjects to ensure that students are learning a consistent writing process throughout the school. The program teaches students to use a structured, color-coded writing process to organize sentences, paragraphs, essays, and longer reports. Staff received a full day of on-site training in the process.
- *Character Education.* The school has implemented Character First, a character development and life skills program that integrates lessons within all core subject classes. Each month the school adopts a different skill or value and teachers include these topics in their daily lessons. Character First provides sample lessons that teachers can use. In addition, minute-long messages of wisdom are read during the school's daily announcements.
- *Block Scheduling.* The school day begins and ends with a core subject block in reading, phonics, English, and/or mathematics. A remediation and enrichment block is scheduled in the middle of the day. During this block, teachers work with small groups of students to close gaps in learning and strengthen reading and math skills. As a result of this scheduling, the total time on task for reading at Christel House Academy exceeds state minimum requirements by 20%; time on task for mathematics exceeds state minimums by 44%.
- *Data-Driven Decision Making.* Through a collaboration with Edison Schools, an experienced academic achievement advisor works with the school and its teachers to ensure alignment of school learning goals and objectives with the results of assessment data. Regular site visits by the advisor ensure that assessment data are analyzed consistently across the school and that school- and classroom-level decisions on how to improve student achievement are based on the data. Additionally, the teaching staff works monthly with an educational consultant who helps them understand and use data to improve and drive instruction.

To provide recognition for students' achievements, the school awards a “Spirit Stick” each week to the class that most displays a positive attitude, models the school's values, and works together as a team. Students earn points for attendance, being on time in classes, being in uniform, exhibiting good behavior, and living up to the school's core values. Children also earn merit points for academic success. In addition to receiving points for the class, individual students that obtain high numbers of points are recognized with Gold, Silver, and Bronze stars. Points accumulate, so the highest scoring students are recognized for each week, month, semester, and school year.



- *Technology-Based Curriculum and Assessment Management.* Teachers use the electronic Plato Learning System and Plato's TeachMaster to ensure that curricular content and instructional strategies are consistent across classrooms. Students take daily, weekly and monthly assessments using Plato, allowing teachers to frequently monitor and report on student proficiency and progress. Students use Plato three times each week to practice math and reading, as well as to apply content skills to interactive activities through Plato's Projects for the Real World. TeachMaster is also used by teachers to create lesson plans for individual students and classes that are aligned to the curriculum. Data collected through Plato are used for instructional planning to improve student learning.
- *Benchmark Assessments.* Children's reading and math skills in second grade and higher are assessed monthly using an online tool provided by Edison that is aligned to Indiana State Academic Standards. Immediate feedback allows teachers and students to monitor mastery of skills and redirect instructional focus as needed.

One third grade student started the school year in September unable to speak any English. She completed the school year able to communicate in English using complete sentences when asked basic questions about her well being, what she studied in class and how she likes attending school. The school attributes her success to the increased time spent developing English skills.

### **Parent involvement**

- *Parent Teacher Support Group.* The Parent Teacher Support Group was created to promote open communication between teachers, administrators, and parents and meets on a monthly basis. Activities that the PTSG undertook this past year include a Uniform Swap Program to provide uniforms to students in need, a skating party fundraiser, and organizing the collection of Campbell's Soup labels and box tops to redeem for educational resources for the school.
- *Parent Tutoring.* A number of parents regularly volunteer to tutor students at Christel House Academy. One dedicated parent volunteer, Susan Stiles, was featured in the Mentors Matter section of the *Indianapolis Star* for her work at Christel House Academy. Ms. Stiles tutors students in the fourth and fifth grades one-on-one several times each week.

### **Supplemental programs and activities**

- *Indy Parks.* Friday afternoon life skills and recreational activities are provided to Christel House students on-campus through a partnership with Indy Parks. These activities are provided at no charge to the school and families.
- *K-Kids.* K-Kids, a youth program of Kiwanis International, is a student-led community service organization with a chapter at Christel House Academy. Service-learning activities from the past year included a Veterans Day visit to senior veterans in a retirement home to hear first person accounts of different wars.
- *Student Council.* The school has a student council that sponsors activities to improve school spirit and pride, as well as community service projects. Students campaign and are elected to the council by their peers.
- *Before- and After-School Care.* Christel House Academy provides before- and after-school care at a minimal cost for children whose parents are working during these times. During these sessions students read, receive homework help, and participate in academic enrichment activities.

### **Community partnerships and donations**

- *Indiana Fever.* Players and coaches from the Indiana Fever professional women's basketball team read to students during school, as part of the Read to Achieve program sponsored by the WNBA. The Fever were in the school three times last year, encouraging all students to read.

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- *Kiwanis International.* Kiwanis International donated books to the Christel House Academy media center for the second year in a row. The estimated value of these donations is nearly \$50,000.
  - *Keep Indianapolis Beautiful.* Again this year, Christel House Academy was the recipient of a Partners in Education (PIE) Grant from Keep Indianapolis Beautiful. This grant allowed the school to expand the outdoor nature lab built on the campus during the 2002-03 school year. Through this grant, Christel House Academy students and teachers worked together with their counterparts to create an outdoor classroom at an Indianapolis Public Schools elementary school.
  - *Health Services.* A partnership with Learning Well, Inc. through Community Hospitals provides a free on-campus health clinic with a school nurse. Learning Well is a nonprofit organization supported by the Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis that operates school-based health clinics throughout Marion County. Additionally, two staff from Cummins Mental Health regularly visit Christel House Academy to provide students with counseling and other mental health services. Cummins services are covered through family health insurance and/or sliding-scale fees.

### **Staffing**

- *Professional Development.* Christel House Academy teachers receive 15 days of on-site training throughout the school year. Training is provided by national education consultants and Edison Schools' academic achievement advisors, and includes topics such as: instructional strategies, classroom management, and the use of data to drive instruction.
- *Master Teachers.* Two experienced Christel House Academy teachers are voluntarily seeking recognition from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. To become national board certified teachers, teachers must demonstrate that their teaching practices meet high standards through a portfolio of their work and by their performance on assessments. These teachers serve as mentors to less-experienced instructional staff. The Academy aims for the majority of its teaching staff to become national board certified teachers.
- *Experienced Teachers.* The school's 16 teachers employed during the 2003-04 school year had 164 years of combined teaching experience.

### **School management**

- The superintendent/acting director of Christel House Academy, Michelle Thompson, is responsible for day-to-day management and operation of the school. She works with the Board to achieve its oversight responsibilities and keeps the Board informed on educational, student achievement, managerial, fiscal and other matters.

The school was created by Christel House, Inc. an Indianapolis-based philanthropy that operates children's orphanages and schools in impoverished regions around the world. Christel House, Inc. assists the charter school with fundraising and provides continuity of leadership.

### **School governance**

- Christel House Academy Board members bring a wide array of experience and knowledge in the area of education, law, finance, marketing, human resources and business management. Board roles and responsibilities are as follows: ensure that the philosophy and mission of the school are followed and the terms of the management contract are met; ensure that student performance is monitored and the school is meeting performance standards; ensure operational efficiency by approving and monitoring annual budgets and operating plans and monitoring operational performance; support school management, parents, teacher and students in making the school a superior learning experience; ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability; establish policies that help the school achieve its mission and educational program; and enhance the school's public image by serving as the school's ambassadors, advocates and community representatives.

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**Facilities**

- Christel House Academy is located on the southside of Indianapolis. In addition to classrooms and administrative offices, the school has a multipurpose room that also serves as a gymnasium and a cafeteria, recreational fields, and an outdoor nature lab. The building is accessible to students and staff who are physically challenged.

**Planned improvements for the upcoming school year**

- Beginning July 1, 2004, Christel House Academy will be operated by Edison Schools, Inc. under a five-year management contract with the school's Board of Directors. Edison manages 130 traditional public and charter public schools in 18 states and the District of Columbia, including two elementary schools in Perry Township. The school will continue to use the Edison Benchmarks and work with the Edison academic achievement advisor. In addition, teaching staff at Christel House Academy will receive additional Edison training and have access to Edison resources and curricular materials. As the transition to Edison management occurs, the school will adopt some additional elements of the Edison school model. Christel House Academy selected Edison to manage the school because Edison's approach aligns well with the school's existing mission and approach.